III.

MAJOR ANDREW CROUCH.

May 5, 1857, the writer paid a visit to the late Major Andrew Crouch, at the time regarded the oldest person in Tygart's Valley. He lived near the mouth of Elkwater, Randolph County. Among the interesting items he gave us was one in reference to a land title.

Near the old Huttonsville brick church one James Warwick built a pole cabin and cleared a potato patch, in virtue of which he claimed the whole bottom contiguous. John and William White, two brothers, asserted their claim to the same land. It was finally decided to settle the dispute by a fair fight, fist and skull. Mr Warwick, being a small man, proposed to Joseph Crouch—or rather to his father—to exchange lands with him. He did so, and moved on to the tract. The Whites came on soon after to drive him away. After some wrangling it was finally agreed upon to settle the dispute by a fight, provided Andrew Crouch would accept the challenge, Joseph Crouch being somewhat deficient in pluck.

The ground was chosen for the contest, and John

White was sent to inform Andrew Crouch of the arrangement. He accepted the challenge and defeated William White. The title was settled, and the parties were very friendly ever afterwards.

William White would frequently visit the home of Andrew Crouch, Senior, and the Major had a vivid remembrance of the impression White's appearance made upon his youthful mind as he walked the floor, he was so very tall and portly.

John White fell in the battle of Point Pleasant, and William White was killed by Indians in what is now Upshur County.

In the visit to Major Andrew Crouch, May 5, 1857, this aged man related a reminiscence of his boyhood.

When he was about six years of age his father took him to the corn field, and while the father worked the little boy sat on the fence. One of his uncles came up in great haste, bringing the news that Lewis Canaan and three children had just been killed by Indians. The two Crouches hurried their families to the home of James Warwick, not far from where the old brick church stood. In their hurry the Crouch brothers and Warwick seized their guns to go to the help of the families exposed to the Indians farther up the river, they neglected to barricade the fort, and so the little boy and two little girls went out to the branch, and while the boy was washing the blood from his face, caused by his nose bleeding, the little girls became frightened, and without saying anything, ran back into

the fort and left him alone. When his bleeding stopped he went back and found the fort barricaded. The Crouch brothers had been met by some persons from the lower fort, took them along, and so their wives and children were left to themselves at Warwick's to make the best of their perilous situation.

When the boy Andrew Crouch came to the fort he heard his aunt in a loud voice giving orders as if there were quite a number of men in the fort, when in fact the force consisted of three white women and one colored man and wife, and some little children. An Indian climbed the roof of one of the fort buildings after nightfall and set it on fire. The colored man put it out. Then the stable was fired. The black man said they should not burn his horse. He went out and carefully approached the place. Seeing an Indian by the light he shot at him, and let the horses out and returned in safety to the fort. He dared the Indians to come on, and as there seemed to be not more than two or three that showed themselves, it seems they were not disposed to storm the loud but little garrison.

When the barn burned down and all became dark, the colored woman insisted on leaving the fort and giving the alarm lower down. She was allowed to do so, and the next day the men came up and moved all farther down, and then the little boy with eight or ten others went to bury the slain Lewis Canaan and his three children. He says no one wept nor did any seem afraid while the burial was going on.

After the funeral the men, seeing no signs of Indians, believed they had withdrawn, and so they dis-

banded. But late in the evening one Indian killed a man named Frank Riffle, near where the brick church stood, and burned two houses not far away belonging to James Lackey.

Major Crouch remembered seeing Lackey not very long after the battle of Point Pleasant. He could show the rock on which Lackey sat and sung a war song, then very popular among the mountaineers in commemoration of that eventful struggle.

In subsequent years James Warwick moved to Ohio, and rewarded his faithful negro with his freedom for his gallantry in saving the fort and the property. This Mr Warwick was the ancestor of the Ohio Congressman who represented the McKinley district a few years since.